(b) The Government has adopted National Policy on Older Persons, which *interalia* addresses the issues related to the legal, social, health problems of the elderly and development of inter-generational bonding.

(c) The Ministry is proposing to introduce the legislation during the current session of the Parliament.

Welfare schemes for poor

2233. SHRI TARIQ ANSWAR: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is fact that about 25 per cent population in the country is still poor;

(b) if so, what steps Government are taking for improving the conditions of the poor; and

(c) what special projects Government have started or are going to start in future, for the welfare of the poor people ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JAGADEESAN):(a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Government has adopted a three pronged strategy to improve the living standard of the poor: (i) acceleration of economic growth with a focus on sectors which are employment intensive, (ii) human and social development through provision of basic minimum services; and (iii) targeted anti-poverty programmes.

(c) The government is running number of programmes including Sampoorna Gramin Rozgar Yojana (SGRY), Swaranjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGYS), Indira Awas Yojana, Pradhan, Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY), Integrated Wastelands Development Programme (IWDP), Accelerated Rural Water Supply Programme (ARWSP) and Central Rural Sanitation Programme (CRSP). In addition, the Government is implementing welfare schemes for the educational, economic and social empowerment of Scheduled Castes and Other Backward Classes.

Rehabilitation of mentally ill

2234. SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the special efforts made by Government to encourage NGO's to take up services and rehabilitation for the persons with mental illness; and

(b) the amount sanctioned to NGOs to make half way home and long care homes in last five years for mentally sick?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JAGADEESAN): (a) and (b) The Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment under Deendayal Disabled Rehabilitation Scheme, releases grant-in-aid to the NGO's for providing vocational training, counseling and medical advice/treatment to the persons with mental illness for their rehabilitations.

(b) No grant-in-aid has been sanctioned to the NGO's in the last five years for the construction of half way homes and long care homes.

Survey regarding social and educational status of backward class

2235. SHRI VIJAYA KUMAR RUPANI: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have any specific information regarding the social and educational status of backward class;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) if not, whether Government have any plan to make a survey in this regard, to get the specific information as Sachar Committee is appointed to get the specific information in this regard for the Muslim community;

(d) whether Government have any plan to uplift the backward committee economically;

(e) if so, the details thereof and the progress made in this regard, State-wise; and

(f) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JAGADEESAN): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The social and educationally backward classes in different States and Union Territory Administrations have been identified. The Government of India has, so far, issued 23 Gazette Notifications including